



# Islamic Online University

# The Three Shelters

A Commentary on Chapters  
112, 113 & 114 of the Qur'aan  
[Also Known as the Three Quls]

By

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## Module 3

تفسير سورة الإخلاص

# Tafseer Soorah al-Ikhlaas

## Verse 3

﴿لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ﴾

### 3. “He does not give birth, nor was He born.”

This verse is a continuation of the presentation of detailed examples of Allaah’s Unique Oneness. False religions generally represent God in human terms by either giving Him human characteristics and or human form. This verse deals primarily with two distinct characteristics of human beings and other living creatures in general: coming into existence by being born and procreating by giving birth.

﴿لَمْ يَلِدْ﴾

“He does not give birth,” because there is nothing similar to him. A child is made from portions (sperm and ovum) of the bodies of its parents which is why it is similar to its parents in form and characteristics.<sup>1</sup> If God gave birth, there would be another god besides Him, which He has already negated. For if dogs have puppies which are little dogs, cats give birth to little cats called kittens, cows have smaller versions of themselves called calves, and human beings beget small versions of themselves called children, what does God have ...a baby God?

The Almighty also rejected the concept of having a child from the perspective that bearing offspring usually requires a female partner similar in form to the male.

﴿أَنِّي يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةً وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ﴾

“How can He have children when He has no wife? He created all things.”

(Soorah al-An‘aam, 6: 101)

Allaah also rejected offspring from the general perspective that it is not befitting, since that would reduce him to the status of His creatures.

<sup>1</sup> Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, Juz ‘Amm, p. 354.

﴿ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ۚ ﴾

**“But it is not suitable for the Most Gracious that He should have a son.”**  
(Soorah Maryam, 19: 92)

This answers the question of those who claim that since it is agreed that God can do anything, He should be able to have a son if He wished. It is not befitting because it would make God like His creatures, which He negates in the last verse of this chapter as He did in the first verse.

Furthermore people have children out of a need for help to survive in this material world or out of the need for continued existence through one's progeny.<sup>2</sup> By describing Himself as *samad* (self-sufficient), Allaah negated this possibility.

Thus, this part of the verse refutes three trends among human beings who deviated in the past and remain deviated from the correct understanding of God: the pagans, Jews and Christians. Pagan Arabs claimed that Angels were the daughters of Allaah, Jews in the Arabian peninsula claimed that ‘Uzair was the son of Allaah and Christians claimed that Jesus, the Messiah, was the Son of God.<sup>3</sup> The Jewish claim is only mentioned once in the Qur’aan and refuted along with the Christian claim as it was held by only a segment of Jews for a limited period:

﴿ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۚ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ قَتَلْتَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ۚ ﴾

**“The Jews call ‘Uzayr a son of Allaah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allaah. That is a saying from their mouths; they are only imitating what the disbelievers of old used to say. Allaah’s curse is upon them: how deluded are they!”** (Soorah Tawbah, 9: 30)

<sup>2</sup> Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, Juz ‘Amm, p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, Juz ‘Amm, p. 354.

Jochen Katz<sup>4</sup> claimed in his attack on the Noble Qur'aan that since there is no evidence in the Bible that Uzayr was called the "son of God", therefore the Noble Qur'aan is in error regarding this issue. However, the *Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem* states that Uzayr, called the Father of Judaism by the Jews, was considered the "son of God" by the Jews of Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the claim of the Christians is refuted in many places throughout the Qur'aan as it was to become the dominant claim. It is refuted by clear statements regarding the reality of God as in this chapter, as well as using logical arguments like those mentioned earlier, and by quoting Jesus as disclaiming such blasphemy and affirming that he only commanded people to worship Allaah alone. Actually, the title "Son of God" to Jesus attached by a sect of Christians to Jesus has no evidence even in the Gospels themselves from statements attributed to Jesus. Instead, he is recorded to have repeatedly called himself "Son of man" (e.g. Luke 9:22) innumerable times. And in Luke 4:41, he actually rejected being called "Son of God": *"And demons also came out of many, crying, 'You are the Son of God!' But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ."*<sup>6</sup> However, there are numerous places in the Old Testament where the title has been given to others. For example, Angels are referred to as "sons of God" in The Book of Job 1:6, *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them."*<sup>7</sup> In the New Testament, when the author of the Gospel according to Luke listed Jesus' ancestors back to Adam, he wrote: *"The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."*<sup>8</sup>

Since the Hebrews believed that God is One, and had neither wife nor children in any literal sense, it is obvious that the expression "son of God" merely meant to them "Servant of God"; one who, because of his faithful service, was

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<sup>4</sup> Jochen Katz Evangelical Christian who attacks on Islaam through his **anti Islaamic** website [answering-islam.com](http://answering-islam.com)

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem*, vol. 6, page 1108.

<sup>6</sup> In the New Testament Book of Acts, there are several outlines of speeches of the early disciples of Jesus, speeches which date from the year 33 CE, almost forty years before the Four Gospels were written. In one of these discourses, Jesus is referred to specifically as *andra apo tou theou*: "a man from God." (Acts 2:22). Not once do these early confessions of faith use the expression *wios tou theou*: "Son of God", but they do speak several times of Jesus as God's servant and prophet (Acts 3:13, 22, 23, 26). The significance of these speeches is that they accurately reflect the original belief and terminology of the disciples, before the belief and terminology were evolved under the influence of Roman religion and Greek philosophy. They reflect a tradition which is older than that used by the Four Gospels, in which Jesus is not invested with godship or divine sonship. (*Bible Studies From a Muslim Perspective*, p. 12).

<sup>7</sup> See also, Job 2:1 and 38:4-7. Other references to sons of God can also be found in Genesis 6:2, Deuteronomy 14:1 and Hosea 1:10.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 3:38.

close and dear to God, as a son is to a father. Christians who came from a Greek or Roman background, later misused this term. In their heritage, “son of God” signified an incarnation of a god or someone born of a physical union between male and female gods.<sup>9</sup> When the Church cast aside its Hebrew foundations, it adopted the pagan concept of “son of God”, which was entirely different from the Hebrew usage.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, the use of the term “son of God” should only be understood from the Semitic symbolic sense of a “servant of God”, and not in the pagan sense of a literal offspring of God. In the four Gospels, Jesus is recorded as saying: “*Blessed are the peace-makers; they will be called sons of God.*”<sup>11</sup>

Hindus today represent the largest group of pagans, followed by their offshoot, Buddhists. Hindu teachings are filled with incarnate gods giving birth. For example, according to Hindu philosophy, *Purusa* was a giant offspring of Brahma, the creator god, having a thousand heads and a thousand eyes. He is a transcendent and immortal god who becomes partially immanent in his creation (vv. 2-4). From him arose *Viraaj*, his feminine counterpart and mate in the creation process. The divine *Purusa* is also a sacrificial offering (vv. 6-10) from whose dismembered body arose the four traditional social castes (*varnas*).<sup>12</sup> *Perusa Hymn* states that *Brahmins* (priests) was the *Purusa*’s mouth, *Kshatriyas* (rulers and warriors) his arms, *Vaishyas* (farmers and merchants) his thighs and *Shoodras* (servants) his feet.<sup>13</sup> The popular god Hanuman, the divine monkey chief, was a child of a nymph by the wind god and Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, was the son of the incarnate destroyer-god Shiva and his wife, *Parvati*.

### Point to Note

Allaah negated giving birth before negating His own birth because most people believe in a main God without a father. The main problem for idolaters is their belief in God’s so-called offspring.<sup>14</sup> Thus, while Zeus in Greek mythology has wives and children, his father is never proposed or discussed. Likewise among Hindus the Supreme Being, *Brahman* is conceived as in-dwelling, all-pervading, unchangeable and eternal, the abstract, impersonal Absolute, in which all things

<sup>9</sup> See Acts 14:11-13. In the city of Lystra (Turkey), Paul and Barnabas preached, and the pagan peoples claimed that they were gods incarnate. They called Barnabas the Roman god Zeus, and Paul the Roman god Hermes.

<sup>10</sup> *Bible Studies from a Muslim Perspective*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:9.

<sup>12</sup> *Dictionary of World Religions*, p. 587.

<sup>13</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 20, p. 552.

<sup>14</sup> *Tafseer Ibn Rajab*, vol. 2, p. 673.

have their origin and end.<sup>15</sup> No mention is made in their scriptures as to the origin of *Brahman*.

﴿وَلَمْ يُولَدْ﴾

**“Nor was He born.”**

Although relatively few people believe or have believed that God was born, the question of God’s origin is often raised by skeptics and atheists. Anas ibn Maalik related that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “*Indeed, your people will continuously question about this and that ... they will say: ‘Well it is Allaah who created the creation, so who created Allaah?’*”<sup>16</sup> The Prophet (ﷺ) also attributed this question to satanic sources according to Aboo Hurayrah who quoted him as saying, “*Satan comes to everyone of you and says ‘Who created this and who created that?’ Until he questions: ‘Who created your Lord?’ When he comes to that, one should seek refuge in Allaah and avoid that thought.*”<sup>17</sup> Often children may ask that question after being told that Allaah created everything around them. Parents are often flabbergasted and flustered, and unable to answer their children. To cover up their own ignorance, they usually scold the children for asking such a question. Instead, the question should be answered by simply informing them that no one created Allaah, because He was the first, and there was no one around before Him. Furthermore, it should be pointed out to atheists that if another being created Allaah, it would be greater than Him, which also contradicts His quality of being the Greatest. Therefore, for the whole process of creation to make any sense, like falling dominoes, it had to have been begun by One who was not Himself a part of the creation.

This portion of the verse subtly rejects the notion that Jesus was God because he was born. For God to be born, He must first have not existed, which contradicts the basic divine attribute of eternal existence. The verse refutes the claim of the likes of Sai Baba who claims that he is god incarnate, an avatar, for he was also born. This part of the verse also discredits all claims that ascribe attributes of divinity to any part of creation.

<sup>15</sup> W.L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), pp.66-7 and 586-7. See also John Hinnells, *Dictionary of Religious* (England: Penguin Books, 1984) pp.67-8.

<sup>16</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 77, no. 244.